

WASHINGTON, DC – Yesterday in the Committee on Education and the Workforce, Congressman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott offered three amendments to H.R. 4297, the Workforce Investment Improvement Act of 2012, to help foster job growth and opportunities for the long-term unemployed and for low-income and disconnected youth.

The first Scott Amendment, which was adopted by voice vote, added the long-term unemployed to the list of groups that state and local workforce investment plans must address.

"The most recent Bureau of Labor Statistics data shows that the number of long-term unemployed rose from 5.1 million to 5.4 million," said Rep. Scott. "Additionally, a recent report by the Pew Charitable Trusts shows that persistent high long-term unemployment erodes critical jobs skills that can lead to lower earning potential for the individual and ultimately lower productivity for our nation's economy. These consequences of long-term unemployment will have profound negative impacts on families and our nation's future economic competitiveness. The Republican Majority has already cut federal unemployment benefits this year. It makes little sense to cut unemployment insurance and then fail to guarantee job training opportunities to the long-term unemployed so they can actually find a job. My amendment will ensure that these Americans are not left behind as our economy continues to recover."

The second Scott Amendment would have authorized \$1.5 billion for a new, one-year program for summer jobs and year-round employment for disadvantaged youth. This amendment was rejected along party lines by a vote of 15 to 23.

"Young people are experiencing the greatest challenges finding work in the current job market," said Rep. Scott. "Summer jobs help our youth get on the right path and stay on the right path. There is no shortage of demand for temporary summer positions, such as those at summer camps and community pools. Local communities, with relatively short lead time, put more than 300,000 youth to work during the summer of 2009 after the passage of the Recovery Act. My amendment would have reinstated this successful program from the Recovery Act to help boost our economic recovery. This amendment would also have created opportunities for year-round employment building upon summer job experience and providing the on-the-job work experience that youth need to advance in the workforce. In contrast, the bill proposed by the Republicans on the Committee offered no guarantee that summer jobs or other forms of youth employment will be made available with WIA funds. Making sure that youth, and particularly at risk-youth, have access to job-training programs ensures that we are giving them a chance to succeed and grow up to be contributing and productive members of society."

The final Scott Amendment would have required at least 25% of the funds authorized by the bill to be allocated to youth program activities, of which at least 50% would have to be used to provide services to out-of-school youth. This amendment was rejected by a vote of 16 to 22.

"This amendment simply went a little further than the original bill in requiring that disadvantaged

youth receive adequate training opportunities," said Rep. Scott. "It is imperative that we invest in our young people on the front end. Those who don't finish high school and go on to continue their education or get a job have a greater likelihood of becoming embroiled in the juvenile justice or criminal justice system. The correlation between employment opportunity and crime is not tenuous. The two systems are very much intertwined; approximately two-thirds of all prisoners are high school dropouts. My amendment would have ensured that funding provided by this bill was targeted to disadvantaged young people so they would not be left behind."

For more information regarding H.R. 4297, the Workforce Investment Improvement Act of 2012, please [click here](#).

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